

SN. 09/737,279

ATTORNEY DOCKET NO. MITS:024

REMARKS

Claims 1-11 remain pending in this application for which applicants seek reconsideration.

Amendment

The Brief Description of the Drawings has been amended to clarify the nature of Figs. 1A and 1B. Claims 1 and 10 have been amended to remove the claim objection, and to further clarify the position of the inwardly and outwardly facing sides in relation to the respective pulley. No new matter has been introduced.

Drawing Objection

The examiner objected to Figs. 1, 1A, and 1B because they are deemed inconsistent with each other. Applicants traverse this objection to the extent that Figs. 1A and 1B are enlarged views that illustrate the aspect that is not illustrated in Fig. 1. Figs. 1A and 1B are not identical to Fig. 1. Specifically, Fig. 1A illustrates the bearing 12 without the bearing retainer 48 applying an axial load against the bearing, while Fig. 1 illustrates the bearing retainer 48 applying an axial load. Note that the gap, namely the difference between W, and D, is small, and Fig. 1A is an enlarged view to show the difference. Fig. 1B illustrates the bearing 86 with the axial load removed to illustrate the wave spring in a free state, whereas Fig. 1 illustrates the wave spring in a compressed form. Applicants submit that the drawings proposed in the last reply fully complies with the drawing requirements. Accordingly, applicants urge the examiner to remove the drawing objection. If the examiner is to maintain the same drawing objection, applicants request an interview with the Supervisory or Primary examiner.

Art Rejection

Claim 1 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by Newman (USP 5,006,092) and claims 2-8, 10, and 11 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Neuman in view of Lamers (USP 5,334,108). Finally, claim 9 was rejected further in view of Hattori (USP 4,913,686). In view of the examiner's reformulation of these rejection, applicants have now clarified



SN. 09/737,279

ATTORNEY DOCKET NO. MITS:024

claims 1 and 10 to specify the location of the inwardly and outwardly sides in relation to the respective pulleys. In this regard, applicants submit that the inwardly and outwardly sides of Newman, as interpreted by the examiner, cannot correspond to the claimed inwardly and outwardly sides. At least in this respect, applicants submit that independent claims 1 and 10 distinguish over the applied references because the applied references would not have disclosed or taught the structural configuration of the first flange in relation to the bearing retainer called for in claim 1, and of the cover and urging member relationship called for in claim 10.

Claim 1 calls for a first flange that extends radially from the first inwardly facing side (the side that is closer to the respective pulley associated with the first bearing) toward the first bearing mounting hole and a bearing retainer provided on the first outwardly facing side of the end wall. The bearing retainer projects radially inwardly toward the first bearing mounting hole and engages the first bearing to pinch the first bearing against the first flange. In Newman, its first flange is formed on the outwardly facing side of its end wall rather than on the inwardly facing side. Moreover, Newman's bearing retainer (outlined in red in the examiner's most recent illustration) engages the bearing from the inwardly facing side, rather than from the first outwardly facing side as called for in the claim. Thus, Newman would not have disclosed or taught the structure recited in claim 1.

Claim 10 calls for an elastically deformable urging member in contact with an inwardly facing side surface of the bearing, and a cover that engages the bearing on an outwardly facing side thereof to pinch the bearing axially inwardly against the urging member. Even under the examiner's new interpretation, Newman's cover (outlined in green in the examiner's most recent illustration) would not have engaged the bearing from the outwardly facing side thereof to pinch the bearing axially inwardly against its urging member (outlined in purple in the examiner's most recent illustration). Moreover, Newman's urging member is not located at the inwardly facing side surface (the side closer to the respective pulley) of the bearing. Lamers, even if it were deemed properly combined with Newman for argument's sake, would not have alleviated Newman's shortcomings since a threaded bolt engages the outwardly facing side surface of the bearing, similar to the Newman's threaded bolt that engages its upper bearing.

SN. 09/737,279

ATTORNEY DOCKET NO. MITS:024

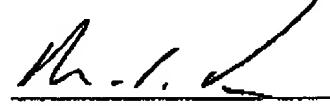
Conclusion

Applicants submit that claims 1-11 patentably distinguish over the applied references and thus urge the examiner to issue an early Notice of Allowance. Should the examiner have any issues concerning this reply or any other outstanding issues remaining in this application, applicants urge the examiner to contact the undersigned to expedite prosecution.

Petition for Time Extension

Applicants request a one-month extension, from June 6, 2003 to July 6, 2003, for replying to the outstanding Office Action. The one-month extension fee is \$110. The Commissioner is authorized to charge \$110 (or any additional fees required to maintain the pendency of this application) to Deposit Account No. 18-2056.

Respectfully submitted,

Date: 06/17/03

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